

CURRENTLY PENDING CLAIMS

7. (Twice amended) A method for inhibiting binding of the E2 protein of HCV to human cells comprising administering to a patient infected with HCV an amount of a CD81 protein effective to bind HCV, wherein the CD81 protein comprises amino acids 113-201 of the human CD81 amino acid sequence depicted in SEQ ID NO:21.

29. (Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein the human CD81 protein is a soluble form of the CD81 protein that comprises a deletion of one or more of the transmembrane binding domains depicted as TM1, TM2, TM3 and TM4 in Figure 1.

31. (Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein the CD81 protein comprises the human CD81 amino acid sequence depicted in SEQ ID NO:21.

32. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the CD81 protein consists of the sequence of amino acids shown at positions 113-201 of the human CD81 amino acid sequence depicted in SEQ ID NO:21.